

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 JUSE-00
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OMB-01 HEW-04 DODE-00 L-03 SS-15 AID-05 /084 W
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FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6338
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY
WHITEHOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 02865

E.O. 11651: XGDS-1
TAGS: SNAR, CO
SUBJECT: DISCUSSIONS WITH COLOMBIAN NARCOTICS OFFICIALS

WHITEHOUSE FOR BOURNE
DEA FOR BENSINGER
FROM: MFALCO

1. AS REPORTED EARLIER, MY FEBRUARY 16 LUNCH WITH JUSTICE
MINISTER GOMEZ, ATTORNEY GENERAL SERRANO, AND DR. GARCES
(INCB MEMBER) WAS CORDIAL AND INFORMATIVE. THE COLOMBIANS
WERE FRANK ABOUT US-COLOMBIA NARCOTICS COOPERATION AND
THEIR OWN POLITICAL VIEWS.

2. WHEN I ASKED WHAT EFFECT THE COMING ELECTIONS MIGHT
HAVE ON OUR NARCOTICS COOPERATION, BOTH SERRANO AND GOMEZ
ASSURED ME THAT THE GOC'S ANTI-NARCOTICS COMMITMENT WOULD
CONTINUE, REGARDLESS OF THE ELECTION RESULTS. THE ATTORNEY
GENERAL, HOWEVER, NOTED THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS COM-
MITMENT MIGHT VARY, DEPENDING ON THE AMOUNT OF RESOURCES
FUTURE GOVERNMENTS MIGHT BE WILLING TO EMPLOY.

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3. GOMEZ, SERRANO AND GARCES AGREED THAT TURBAY WOULD
ALMOST CERTAINLY WIN THE PRESIDENCY, ALTHOUGH THEY MADE
CLEAR THEIR PREFERENCE FOR LLERAS. ALL THREE COLOMBIANS DE-
SCRIBED TURBAY AS AN HONEST MAN, BUT THEY EXPRESSED SOME
CONCERN THAT AS PRESIDENT, TURBAY MIGHT SURROUND HIMSELF
WITH UNSCRUPULOUS PEOPLE, INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF
CORRUPTION.

4. REGARDING THEIR OWN POLITICAL FUTURES, SERRANO (A CONSERVATIVE) STATED THAT, UNLIKE GOMEZ (A LIBERAL), HE WOULD NOT BE LEAVING OFFICE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTION OF THE NEW PRESIDENT, BUT WOULD PROBABLY BE RETAINED UNTIL NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER, OR PERHAPS AS LATE AS JUNE 1979. HIS DEPARTURE DEPENDS UPON THE TIMING OF THE ASSEMBLY'S SELECTION OF HIS SUCCESSOR. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SEEMED CERTAIN HE WOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT TIME TO ENSURE THAT HIS NEW ANTI-NARCOTICS ORGANIZATION WOULD BE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED. MOREOVER, HE ASSURED ME THAT THE NON-POLITICAL SELECTION PROCESS FOR A.G. ENSURED THAT HIS SUCCESSOR WOULD BE HONEST AND ABLE.

5. ATTORNEY GENERAL SERRANO EXPRESSED GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH OUR BILATERAL NARCOTICS PROGRAMS, AND WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH THE FIREARM DECISION. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE HELICOL CONTRACT BECAUSE OF NUMEROUS PERSONNEL PROBLEMS. ACCORDING TO SERRANO, SINCE THE RECENT WOUNDING OF ONE OF THEIR NUMBER, THE HELICOL CIVILAN CONTRACT PILOTS HAVE BALKED AT UNDER-TAKING DANGEROUS MISSIONS. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL NOTED THAT HIS DEPUTY, SR. GARCIA, WAS ABLE TO KEEP THE HELICOL PILOTS AT THEIR JOBS ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY.

6. SERRANO SAID HE WOULD PREFER TO CONTRACT DIRECTLY WITH
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THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, WHICH COULD PERFORM THE MAINTENANCE WORK AND FORMER MILITARY PILOTS WHO WOULD ACCEPT OPERATIONAL RISKS. ALTHOUGH HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE HELICOL CONTRACT HAS OVER A YEAR TO RUN, SERRANO APPEARED TO BELIEVE THAT IN VIEW OF THESE LABOR PROBLEMS, THE COMPANY MIGHT BE RECEPTIVE TO AN EARLIER TERMINATION OF THE CONTRACT.

7. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SHOWED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN USING BANKING LAWS TO NEUTRALIZE INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKERS. COLOMBIAN CITIZENS ARE PROHIBITED FROM MAINTAINING OVERSEAS BANK ACCOUNTS, BUT ACCORDING TO SERRANO MANY DO SO, PARTICULARLY IN THE U.S. HE WOULD LIKE TO COOPERATE IN LOCATING THE U.S. ACCOUNTS OF KNOWN COLOMBIAN TRAFFICKERS, WHICH COULD THEN HAVE THEIR ACCOUNTS SEIZED AND BE SENTENCED TO PRISON TERMS.

8. TREASURY DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARTHUR SINAI (CND DELEGATE) MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH THE COLOMBIAN DELEGATION, AND RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS EXAMINING U.S. TREASURY INFORMATION ON COLOMBIAN ACCOUNTS, IN AMERICAN BANKS, PARTICULARLY IN FLORIDA. DETAILS OF CON-

SULTATIONS WILL BE ARRANGED BY TREASURY.

9. ON FEBRUARY 22, CND CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DESIGNATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL
(UNFDAC) BROR REXED; CND REP OF CANADA DR. DON SMITH;
A. G. SERRANO; MINISTER GOMEZ; SR. GARCIA; AND FALCO MET
TO DISCUSS GOC DESIRE FOR UNFDAC (AND PERHAPS CANADIAN)
TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN SUPPRESSING ILLICIT
MARIJUANA CULTIVATION AND IN DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE
DRUG ABUSE PROGRAM, WHICH WAS FULLY DESCRIBED IN BOOKLET

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 GENEVA 02865

WHITE HOUSE FOR BOURNE
DEA FOR BENSINGER
FROM FALCO

PROVIDED BY SERRANO (COPY WILL BE POUCHED). REXED AND SMITH WERE INTERESTED AND RECEPTIVE TO THE COLOMBIAN PRESENTATION, AND PROMISED TO CONSIDER SENDING TECHNICAL ADVISORS TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR ALTERNATIVE INCOME PROJECTS IN GUAHIRA AND FOR PREVENTION PROGRAMS. WITH REGARD TO ILLICIT MARIJUANA CULTIVATION, I BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED THE FEASIBILITY STUDY OF HERBICIDE ERADICATION PROVIDED AT THE REQUEST OF THE GOC LAST SUMMER. SERRANO THEN INDICATED THAT BECAUSE OF MANY COMPLEXITIES, HERBICIDE ERADICATION WAS PROBABLY NOT PRACTICAL AT THIS TIME. MAIN INTEREST OF GOC OFFICIALS APPEARED TO BE EXPLORING NEW SOURCES OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL SUPPORT FOR DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS, ALTHOUGH THEY REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR U.S. COOPERATION. THEY DID NOT MENTION THE IM-

PENDING CHANGE IN GOC GOVERNMENT, PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY FEEL
IT WILL NOT AFFECT GOC COMMITMENT TO DRUG CONTROL. THE
MEETING ADJOURNED ON A POSITIVE NOTE, REXED INDICATING HE
WOULD SEND A GROUP OF EXPERTS TO COLOMBIA THIS SPRING IN
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RESPONSE TO THE OFFICIAL GOC INVITATION PERSONALLY DE-
LIVERED BY SERRANO AND GOMEZ. VANDEN HEUVEL

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